

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 9 and 12 have been amended for clarity so that the words "other" and "another" have been replaced by -- second -- and the logical channel previously specified in these claims is indicated to be the first logical channel. The changes do not require a new search or consideration of new issues. Consequently, entry of the amendment is in order.

The rejection of claims 1, 7-10, 12 and 13 as being obvious as a result of Fraser, US Patent 5,329,589 is traversed. Independent claims 1, 9 and 12 differ from Fraser by requiring the link between the first terminal and the second terminal to be a multiplex link including two logical channels, now specified in the claims as first and second logical channels; because the claims say the multiplex link includes first and second logical channels, a multiplex link having more than two channels is covered. The operation validating method of claim 1 does not break or interrupt a call between the first terminal and the second terminal while an operation is being validated.

Fraser fails to disclose such a multiplex link between customer C 403 (first terminal) and vendor V 405 (second terminal). Fraser does not suggest using both a channel in an existing link in maintain would the use of another (second) channel for the call between the first terminal T1 and the second terminal T2. Consequently, Fraser fails to disclose a key aspect of the Independent claims, which is not cured by the secondary references, Gore, US Patent 5,313,463, relied on combination with Fraser to reject claims 2, 3, 5 and 6, or Lineham, US Patent 6,327,578, relied on in combination with Fraser and Gore to reject claim 11. Because Independent claims 1, 9 and 12 are not rendered obvious by Fraser, the remaining claims are allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, entry of the amendment and allowance are in order.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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